

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 704

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Joe “Tiger Joe” Thompson, Jr., recipient of the French Legion of Honor.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Tennessee have, throughout the years, been called upon to take up arms against the enemies of this great nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, while the heroic deeds of Tennesseans have been extolled throughout the history of our state and nation, the distinguished military service of each and every proud Tennessean should be illuminated, shared, and properly honored, especially those honorable military veterans who served during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Joe “Tiger Joe” Thompson, Jr. of Nashville is one such individual who recently received the Legion of Honor from France for his valiant service as an aerial reconnaissance pilot with the United States Air Corps during World War II; and

WHEREAS, established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the National Order of the Legion of Honor is the country’s highest honor, equal to knighthood, and recognizes eminent service to the French Republic; and

WHEREAS, while deployed with the 9th Air Force, Mr. Thompson flew ninety missions in a P-51 Mustang Spitfire and ascended to the rank of major, before becoming the commanding officer of the 109th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron; and

WHEREAS, in honor of his heroic feats, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with fifteen oak leaf clusters from the United States and the Croix de Guerre (Cross of War) from France; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his reconnaissance photography, Mr. Thompson took nearly 600 photographs documenting the lives of Allied soldiers, and his work has been featured in exhibitions on both sides of the Atlantic, some of which appears in the 2006 publication *Tiger Joe: A Photographic Diary of a World War II Aerial Reconnaissance Pilot*; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, where he was chapter president of Phi Delta Theta, Mr. Thompson served with acumen and alacrity as a financial representative with Northwestern Mutual for sixty-five years, the longest run in the 143-year history of the Nashville branch; and

WHEREAS, "Tiger Joe" Thompson has been an active member of the community through various organizations, including serving as an elder at First Presbyterian Church, chairman of United Givers Fund (United Way), president for the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, Nashville Rotary, Vanderbilt Alumni Association, and the Children's Museum, and one of only three life members of The Salvation Army's Nashville Area Command Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, a faithful and loving family man, Mr. Thompson has enjoyed many happy years with his wife, Martha Crook Thompson, and their family; and

WHEREAS, while no offering can properly relay our gratitude for his bravery in the line of fire and his dedication to preserving the blessed freedom that is inseparable from our American heritage and ideals, it is most appropriate that we should honor Mr. Thompson to the full extent of our ability, as he has made untold and innumerable sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today and that our progeny will hopefully continue to cherish for generations to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that we honor and commend Joe "Tiger Joe" Thompson, Jr., recipient of the French Legion of Honor, for his military service during World War II, applaud his dedication and bravery, and extend our best wishes for his continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.